

THE TIDINGS



LAKE MERRITT INSTITUTE

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A community based, non-profit corporation, established 1995; IRS Code 501(c)(3); EIN 94-3214160

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“The Tidings” is an editorial newsletter. Posted opinions are not necessarily those of the City of Oakland

NEW FOUNTAIN LIGHTS UP FOR 4th OF JULY AT GLEN ECHO



Photo by James Robinson

After years of service, the aeration fountain at Grand and Harrison gave up the ghost. Not specifically designed for marine environments, its pump was regularly overcome by encrusting marine life settling out of the water as the lake becomes more “oceanized” by years of drought (read global warming). Fountains are installed and maintained by The Lake Merritt Institute to improve dissolved oxygen in the water. They must now be scraped clean every month. Silt and muck – and of course trash – are drawn up at low tide from below causing overheating and shut-downs that wore the old fountain out before its time.

The exciting new fountain is up in time for Fourth of July! Special thanks are due to LMI’s Director James Robinson

and staff, and to a generous donation by the residents of St. Paul’s Towers. St. Paul’s is contributing to regular maintenance of the fountain as well. James and his staff are taking measures to protect the fountain by increased scraping, turning it off during low tides and using a special pump to sweep silt from below the intake opening. Would you like to adopt a fountain? Contact lmi@netwiz.net or call 510-238-2290.

What can YOU do to protect the environment at Lake Merritt for people and wildlife? A healthy park depends on a healthy lake. YOU can join forces with other caring community members like you and become a member of **The Lake Merritt Institute (LMI)**. You can join our Clean Lake Program volunteers for weekly clean-ups (email Executive Director James Robinson at lmi@netwiz.net). You can make a tax-exempt charitable donation to LMI to support our work.

LMI removes tens of thousands of gallons of trash yearly that can entangle and sicken wildlife. We respond to illegal dumping of objects of all sizes including e-scooters, cars, needles and chemicals entering through storm drains. Use the membership and donation form at the end of this newsletter or visit lakemerrittinstitute.org.



Right: Alfredo Sanchez, LMI Staff, cleans algae from the light fixture on the new fountain.

LMI in MAY: 3,990 gallons of trash were removed from the lake by staff and volunteers in May. Eight used hypodermic needles were removed. Total trash collected to date in 2021 is **23,850 gallons**.

LMI Director James Robinson hosted **94 volunteers** and gave 1 presentation.

0.0 inches rain recorded recorded by LMI rain gauge

THANK YOU! The Lake Merritt Institute thanks everyone for loving Lake Merritt and --in advance-- for keeping the shoreline clean by responsibly disposing of trash or packing it out. We thank *all* of the individuals and organizations that have spent time removing trash in heavily-used Lakeside Park this month. To acknowledge a few: Lake Merritt Advocates, Oakland Technical High School, American Indian High School, MudLab, Lakeshore Neighbors, Oakland Public Works Adopt-a-Spots, Downtown Street Team, Team Oakland, Youth Empowerment Program (YEP), Rotary Nature Center Friends, St. Paul's School, Park Day School, and Head Royce. Your stewardship is appreciated!

The Pollinator Posse hosted a really smelly fundraiser this month. Pollination is a partnership between flowers and a host of living species that feast on nectar and pollen provided by flowers to attract them. Sometimes the relationship is quite specific. Pollinator Posse members Susan Casentini and Kyle Milligan had tended a giant corpse flower, *Amorphophallus titanum*, the largest flower in the world, for about 6 years when it began to bloom! Corpse flowers are known for their very brief but overwhelming stench that is thought to attract flies and beetles carrying pollen. The resourceful Posse members seized the opportunity to raise funds for their award-winning pollinator conservation programs by inviting local residents to view and smell the flower in return for an optional donation to the nonprofit.



Photo provided by Susan Casentini.

Although the corpse flower has stopped blooming, you can still make a donation at <https://pollinatorposse.org/donate/> and see the recorded celebration zoom meeting that featured an amazing lecture by naturalist Damon Tighe. [“Stinky Plants and the Pollinators that Love Them.”](#)

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A surprising takeaway: The giant corpse flower is in the same taxonomic Family, *Araceae*, as the tiny, humble duckweed (*Lemna minor*) that covers parts of Lake Merritt sometimes during fresh springs.

The program aired on June 19th (https://youtu.be/hugMH_pXwBo). Would have been great on [Smell-o-Vision](#).

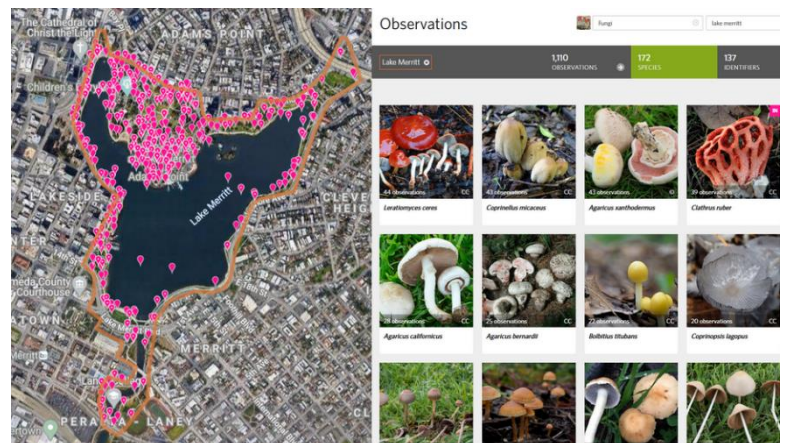


Duckweed; Photo at Calscape.org.

Up-coming Event: JULY’S LAKESIDE CHAT #8 The Mushrooms of Lake Merritt with Damon Tighe - Friday, July 9th, 7- 8 pm. Free Online Event

Damon Tighe of the California Center for Natural History will share his twin passions for fungi and biotech education. Learn about the surprising diversity of fungi that call the Jewel of Oakland home; everything from bioluminescent fungi, to deadly toadstools, and ones that turn insects into zombies.

A walk around the lake will never be the same.



Register [HERE](https://lakesidechat7-mushrooms-of-lakemerritt.eventbrite.com) => <https://lakesidechat7-mushrooms-of-lakemerritt.eventbrite.com>

Community Water Quality Report



Salinity was measured by Katie Noonan, Jaclyn Lim and Leland Walton (Rotary Nature Center Friends photo).

Water quality was measured at 11 a.m. on June 9th, 2021 at the Lake Merritt Boating Center dock by The Tidings editor Katie Noonan and volunteers Jaclyn Lim and Leland Walton.

Depth 1.6 meters; Water Clarity >1.60 meters (Secchi Depth) CLEAR

Temperature: 21 degrees Celsius (degC) at the top (64 deg Fahrenheit)/21.5 degrees Celsius at the bottom (65 deg Fahrenheit) NORMAL

Dissolved Oxygen 5.5 parts per million (ppm) at the top/6 ppm at the bottom. (Meets the EPA minimum standard of 5 ppm)

Salinity 34 parts per thousand (ppt) top/33 ppt bottom (**Saline or salty for this time of year**).

pH: 7 at the top/7.5 at the bottom NORMAL

JOIN US! - THE CLEAN LAKE PROGRAM IS OPEN!



Do you want to help the community and get regular exercise? -- clean the lake! Contact LMI's Executive Director James Robinson at lmi@netwiz.net or call the LMI office at (510) 238-2290 and leave a message. James will arrange for your training in safety protocols by an experienced A-Team volunteer.

If you would like to bring a group of volunteers or use the U-Clean-It stations independently, contact James at lmi@netwiz.net and leave a message so that he can explain our public health policy for volunteering and assist you in proper training to participate in the Clean Lake Program.



TIME TO MAKE A CHARITABLE DONATION TO THE LAKE MERRITT

The Lake Merritt Institute is a 501(c)3 non-profit charity, founded in 1992. We educate the public about urban runoff and involve them in solving the problem. Result: Volunteers remove [thousands of gallons](#) of trash each year that would otherwise increase the world ocean's plastics crisis *and* Oakland's regulatory liability for water quality.

LMI is funded by the City of Oakland and by donations from caring people like you. Help us preserve our beautiful and hard-working lake in the heart of downtown Oakland. You can download an application at lakemerrittinstitute.org. A membership application is at the end of this issue.

CLIMATE CORNER: THERE IS NO VACCINE

- A guest editorial by Dr. Richard Bailey

There is no vaccine for the climate emergency.

During the pandemic, fossil fuel emissions dropped by about six percent. But emissions are only indirectly related to climate change. Despite this temporary drop, the rise in atmospheric carbon levels *continued unabated*, hitting a seasonal peak of 419 parts per million in May of this year. It just kept climbing despite the pandemic and related business closures.

We have the technology to lower carbon levels, but we do not have the personal, or political will to make it happen.

This tells us that there is no vaccine for the climate emergency. No quick fix.

OK, so we don't fix it: What then?

According to recent research*, in our lifetimes (within 30 years):

“The economies of rich countries will shrink by twice as much as they did in the Covid-19 crisis if they fail to tackle rising greenhouse gas emissions”

If you think the loss of jobs we just experienced due to covid was bad, try to imagine what is coming.

Fires, smoke, drought, water shortages, sea level rise, hurricanes, agricultural losses, ocean acidification and the other aspects of climate disruption, are killing jobs by displacing people, by destroying their homes and businesses, and by disrupting agriculture and water supplies.

Those of you who read this column know by now that the collective, most effective way to reduce emissions and lower carbon levels in the long term is to tax carbon pollution, and return a carbon dividend to those who are most needy, as proposed by the Citizens' Climate Lobby. There is no vaccine, but to quote Dr. Peter Joseph: “A carbon tax can act fast, like your favorite headache medicine.”

But until Congress can get it together to tax carbon pollution (multiple bills are currently being considered) here is something you can do:

Consider your own energy uses. How about replacing a gas dryer, gas furnace, or water heater with a mini-split heat pump? Or why not improve insulation, or get an induction stove? Substantial rebates are now available in the Bay Area from <https://www.bayrenresidential.org/rebates>. You will use less natural gas, and your utility bills will be lower as well. In addition, solar panel prices have dropped 70% in the last several years, and cost even less if you buy them from the right company (hint – they make more than solar panels). This writer recently had 12 panels installed for \$8,100 minus a tax credit. Sunlight is free; catch it.

Consider this example:

*Because they transfer instead of generate **heat**, ENERGY STAR certified **ductless mini-split heat pumps** use 60% less energy than standard home electric resistance-based **heating systems**. They also cut cooling costs by 30% compared to conventional room air conditioners.*

A three-room mini-split heat pump/AC can be purchased For about \$15,000. Multiple room outlets allow individual room temperature controls. Filters in each outlet clean the air, allowing you to keep fire smoke outside, not in your lungs.



You may need the savings from more efficient energy if your job is one that is hit hard by climate change.

*<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jun/07/climate-crisis-to-shrink-g7-economies-twice-as-much-as-covid-19-says-research?>

[https://ballotpedia.org/California_Plastic_Waste_Reduction_Regulations_Initiative_\(2022\)](https://ballotpedia.org/California_Plastic_Waste_Reduction_Regulations_Initiative_(2022))

THANK YOU, ST. PAUL'S TOWERS!



LMI presented Wade Sherwood, who is a resident of St. Paul's Towers and a valued member of LMI's "A-Team", for St. Paul's Towers' generous donation to help maintain/purchase the New Glen Echo fountain. Thank you, St. Paul's Towers for contributing to the health and beauty of Lake Merritt.



Please fill out this form and mail to:

The Lake Merritt Institute – New Member
568 Bellevue Avenue
Oakland, CA 94610

All contributions are tax deductible and support Institute programs.

name: _____

address: _____

city, state, zip code: _____

e-mail: _____

Membership level – choose one

\$35 Cormorant (newsletter available via electronic mail only at this level)

The following membership levels include **either** email newsletter, **or** paper copy via US mail

Please circle your preference: email or US Mail

\$50 Snowy Egret

\$50 Blue Heron

\$100 Business/Swan

\$250 Leopard Shark

\$500 Striped Bass

\$1000 Least Tern

Document named LMI New Member Application last revised 2020.07.06

Please direct questions and comments to The Tidings Editor, Katie Noonan, at ktnoon@aol.com.

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